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**ISRAEL INTERCEPTS GAZA FLOTILLA
CARRYING MANY GLOBAL ACTIVISTS**
Israeli naval forces on Thursday intercepted and boarded vessels in a flotilla attempting to break its blockade of Gaza, detained top activists

GLOBAL SUMUD FLOTILLA LARGEST EVER

The Global Sumud Flotilla was the largest yet to try to break the blockade, and it comes at a time of growing criticism of Israel's conduct in Gaza, where its offensive has killed tens of thousands of people. Activists said they hoped the sheer number of boats would make it difficult for Israel to intercept them all, but Israel declared the operation over on Thursday



BACKERS TAKE OUT RALLIES AGAINST ISRAEL

Supporters of the flotilla took to streets in several cities across the globe, including Rome, Istanbul, Athens, Greece, and Buenos Aires in Argentina after the news of the interception broke
Organisers of the flotilla said 39 of their boats were intercepted or assumed to be intercepted in a nightlong Israeli operation | P11



450

ACTIVISTS ON 39 BOATS WERE
CARRYING AID TO GAZA

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‘Bribe’ row drives probe on Customs

SIDDHARTH PRABHAKAR & DIPAK MONDAL @ Chennai/ New Delhi

BRIBERY allegations levelled against Chennai Customs by a Tamil Nadu-based company importing electronic goods, including sex toys, from China raised a massive storm on social media culminating in the Union Ministry of Finance announcing a “detailed factual enquiry” on Thursday.

The ministry has directed the Department of Revenue to conduct a ‘fair and transparent investigation’, deputing a senior officer to examine all evidence and hear all parties involved in the matter at the earliest.

The controversy erupted after Wintrack Inc announced on X on Wednesday night that it would cease its import-export operations in India from October 1, citing “relentless harassment” and retaliation by Chennai Customs officials after it allegedly exposed bribery demands.

Wintrack Inc bypassed compliance norms: Customs

The Customs department has alleged that Wintrack attempted to bypass compliance requirements by routing similar shipments through a related entity and accused the importer of trying to intimidate senior officers during adjudication proceedings



Kharge stable after pacemaker procedure

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge underwent a pacemaker implantation procedure at a private hospital in Bengaluru on Thursday.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to Kharge and inquired about his health, and wished him a speedy recovery on his ‘X’ handle. “Praying for his continued well-being and long life,” he said.

Kharge’s son, Karnataka’s Rural Development and Panchayat Raj and IT-BT Minister Priyank Kharge said the pacemaker procedure was successfully completed. “It was a short and minor procedure and he has been stable after the procedure,” he tweeted.

According to Priyank, Mallikarjun Kharge is expected to resume work from October 3 and attend all his scheduled engagements. “Our gratitude for the concern, support and affection extended by all,” he added. Mallikarjun Kharge also posted on ‘X’: “My sincere thanks to Congress cadres, leaders and supporters for the outpouring of wishes. My deepest gratitude. I intend to start my work schedule soon.” The 83-year-old Congress leader was admitted to MS Ramaiah Hospital on Tuesday after he felt discomfort in breathing.

WITH THIS ISSUE
CITY’S BEST WEEKEND GUIDE
INDULGE
38 PAGES, INCLUDING 24 OF INDULGE (TABLOID)

Govt-society disconnect led to unrest in Nepal: RSS chief

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

EXPRESSING serious concern over the recent unrest in India’s neighbourhood, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat on Thursday linked the turbulence to the disconnect between governments and societies, as well as the lack of capable and people-oriented administrators there.

In his annual Vijayadashami address in Nagpur, Bhagwat cautioned that some forces, both internal and external, are attempting to create similar disturbances within Bharat.

“The regime change in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and more recently Nepal due to violent outburst of public anger is a concern for us,” he said.

The natural and immediate cause of such disturbances is discontent between the government and the society and the lack of able and people-oriented administrators. However, violent outbursts do not have the power to bring about the desirable change. “Only democracy can bring lasting change,” he added.

EXPRESS READ

LBA confirms member's suicide in Ladakh

LEH: A general council member of the Ladakh Buddhist Association (LBA) has committed suicide by hanging himself at his residence, its president Chering Dorjay Lakruk said on Thursday. Stenzin Dorjay, a resident of Skitman village, some 100 km from Leh town, was a big fan of climate activist Sonam Wangchuk who was detained under National Security Act | P10



Former President Ram Nath Kovind (right) with RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat ahead of the latter’s Vijayadashami address in Nagpur on Thursday | P11

Interest, does not pose a challenge for India. “The world operates through mutual interdependence. By becoming *atmanirbhar* (self-reliant), and being cognizant of global unity, we must ensure that this global interdependence does not become a compulsion for us, and we are able to act according to our own will. There is no substitute for Swadeshi and Swatamban,” he asserted.

Bhagwat also raised concerns about global conflicts and increasing climate imbalance.

Commenting on the US-imposed tariffs, Bhagwat said the US policy, based solely on self-

Interest, does not pose a challenge for India. “The world operates through mutual interdependence. By becoming *atmanirbhar* (self-reliant), and being cognizant of global unity, we must ensure that this global interdependence does not become a compulsion for us, and we are able to act according to our own will. There is no substitute for Swadeshi and Swatamban,” he asserted.

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Rajnath Singh applying the ‘tilak’ on Army chief Gen Upendra Dwivedi in Bhuj | P11

India warns Pak over any buildup in Sir Creek area

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh says any misadventure will invite decisive response

MAYANK SINGH @ New Delhi

IN a stern warning to Pakistan, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday said any misadventure by Islamabad in the Sir Creek sector will invite a “decisive response”.

Singh’s remarks from a military base near the India-Pakistan border in Bhuj in Gujarat came against the backdrop of the Pakistan expanding military infrastructure in the disputed region.

“Even after 78 years of Independence, Pakistan continues to create disputes over the Sir Creek Sector, despite India’s repeated efforts to resolve the issue through dialogue.” He pointed out that Pakistan’s recent expansion of military infrastructure in the Sir Creek Sector reflects its ill intent.

“If Pakistan dares to act in Sir Creek Sector, the reply will be so strong that it will change both history and geography. In 1965, the Indian Army showed courage by reaching Lahore and in 2025 Pakistan must remember that the road to Karachi also passes through the

Creek.” The Creek is a 98 km long narrow strip of disputed water between the two countries in the marshy areas of Rann of Kutch and opens up into the Arabian Sea.

The area has inhospitable weather and terrain, while the marshes are home to poisonous snakes and scorpions.

There are continuing disputes in this area as have been reported by this paper in the past.

After performing a puja at the Bhuj Military Station on the occasion of Vijayadashami, Singh lauded the armed forces for successfully thwarting Pakistan’s attempts to breach India’s defence network during Operation Sindoor.

“Pakistan had tried to penetrate India’s defences from Leh to Sir Creek Sector, but the swift and effective counter-action of the Indian forces during Operation Sindoor not only exposed the weaknesses of Pakistan’s air defence system but also sent out a clear message to the world that India can inflict heavy damage at a time, place and manner of its choosing,” Singh said.

If Pakistan dares to act in Sir Creek, the reply will be so strong it will change both the history and geography
Rajnath Singh

2 INDIGO FLIGHTS

5+ years on, direct China air link from October 26

JAYANTH JACOB AND S LALITHA @ New Delhi

INDIA and China have agreed to resume direct commercial flights by this month-end, marking yet another notable step toward normalising bilateral ties that have remained strained since the 2020 border standoff.

The announcement comes after months of technical-level discussions between the civil aviation authorities on both sides, part of the Indian government’s broader approach toward the gradual normalisation of bilateral relations.

IndiGo was first off the blocks, announcing the launch of its daily air service on October 26 from Delhi and Kolkata to Guangzhou in South China. Air India, which operated the last flight to China in February 2020, will resume operations on the Delhi-Shanghai sector before this year-end.

IndiGo is targeting the trading section that purchases products from China for sale in India with its connectivity to Guangzhou while Air India’s focus will be on the business community and students, a source said.

“Subject to regulatory approvals, IndiGo will also introduce direct flights between Delhi and Guangzhou shortly,” IndiGo said in a statement.

IndiGo will use its Airbus A320 neo aircraft for operations between India and China before the pandemic and has many of the necessary arrangements and processes already in place. The past experience and familiarity with local partner will enable IndiGo to resume these flights swiftly,” the statement said.

Almatti lost 7.556 tmcft capacity to silt: Study

FIROZ ROZINDAR @ Vijayapura

THE Almatti reservoir, one of the largest dams in Karnataka with a designed storage capacity of 123.081 tmcft, has lost 7.556 tmcft of capacity owing to silt deposit over the past two decades. The current water storage capacity now stands at 115.525 tmcft, according to a study conducted by the Karnataka Engineering Research Centre (KERS) in 2023.

The final report of the backwater silt study, which covered several reservoirs in Karnataka, including Almatti, has been submitted to the State Government as well as to the chief engineers of the respective reservoirs. The findings highlight the gradual decline in water storage due to silt accumulation since the Almatti reservoir became operational in 2001.

KERS Director KG Mahesh, based at Krishnarajasagar,



The Almatti reservoir in Vijayapura

Mandya district, said that the survey was carried out over three months, covering 487 sqkm from the backwaters of the Almatti reservoir to the Hipparagi reservoir. “An advanced echo-sound system installed in boats was used for the study. Sound waves were released into the water and the returning echoes were captured to measure depth. Based on this data, specialised software calculated the silt content. The analysis was completely scientific, and a comprehensive report has been submitted to the government,” Mahesh explained.

₹3,705cr tax devolution for K’taka

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

IN an early payout of tax devolution funds that would help Karnataka, the Union government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has released an advance tax devolution of Rs 3,705 crore to the state as part of the Rs 1,01,603 crore tax devolution package for all states.

Announced on the day of Ayudha Puja, this Dasara festive season amount aims to fuel capital spending and welfare initiatives.

The funds, disbursed nine days ahead of the usual October 10 devolution, will empower the state to accelerate development projects and welfare measures.

Union Minister Pralhad

Josh, MP from Karnataka, posted, “Karnataka’s share is set to drive economic momentum and uplift communities statewide. The Central government, under the leadership of Hon’ble PM Shri @narendramodi ji, has released an advance tax devolution of ₹1,01,603 crore to States, of which Karnataka will receive ₹3,705 crore.”



GRAND FINALE

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar and others offer flowers to Goddess Chamundeshwari during Jambho Savari on Vijayadashmi day in Mysuru on Thursday | UDAYASHANKAR S | P2

AI 171 CRASH

The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau, which is working on its final report on the AI 171 crash at Ahmedabad, has asked the Airline Pilots’ Association of India to attend a consultation meet at DGCA HQ in Delhi on Friday